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## THE PLACE OF ATHLETICS IN EDUCATION.

THERE is no more intricate problem before American educators than the right settlement of all the vexing questions that concern the physical side of education. The problem is still a long way from a satisfactory settlement, and it ought to be useful for a man who is engaged in upholding the best standards of athletics in his own college, and who is interested in all educational reform, to present, as he sees them, some phases of this difficult subject.

Athletics hold a very prominent place in American schools and colleges. Intercollegiate games stand out in prominence clearly above all other forms of student life. It is about these that college enthusiasm centers, and it is to these that public attention is attracted. This is the one side of college life that awakens a widespread public interest and enthusiasm. The large place held by sports in American colleges is indicated by the magnitude of the receipts from athletics at two of the big colleges. At Harvard the receipts last year were \$96,090.20, and at Yale \$92,711.88. Few of our Southern colleges have any such income from all sources. These enormous sums may serve not only to indicate the large place that intercollegiate games hold in public interest but also to emphasize the importance to colleges of setting themselves right on the question of athletics.

There can be no doubt that there are benefits to be derived from intercollegiate athletics. And it is equally certain that there are grave dangers and even positive evils. It is my opinion that, when properly regulated, the benefits to be derived from intercollegiate athletics outweigh the evils; for it is beyond question that the growth in college sports has within a generation improved the physical condition of American students. College athletics have tended to spread throughout the country a wholesome love for sports and the out-of-door life, which is one of the characteristics of our day. They have been

in part the cause of the acknowledged decrease in rowdyism in American colleges. They have made for temperance and moderate living among college students. They have helped to develop in students self-control and a spirit of fair play. They have had a healthful influence in bringing graduates and undergraduates together; they are the center and inspiration of college loyalty.

The exclusive devotion to studies—a constant danger to the more serious—and the inactive, physically indolent life, to which all students are peculiarly liable, tend to dwarf the physical side of young men. To reach the highest mental development, a man, of course, needs a vigorous body. College sports demand strong men, and they afford attractive opportunities for physical development. The influence reaches many men who take no part in the great games, and the good effects extend to the outside public in promoting a general love of sports and the active life of the great out of doors. This love of outdoor life is perhaps more needed in America than elsewhere in the world, because Americans are busier and more strenuously devoted to business than any other nation. If college sports did nothing more than foster this love of out-of-door life, they would be serviceable in America. The severe training that American college athletes are subjected to develops temperate and moderate living among them, and the fact that a number of the more representative and better-known students are devoted to a moderate and temperate life has a good effect in making prevalent this sort of ideal among the general body of students. Intercollegiate games train men in self-control, in the development of steady nerves, in displaying calmness and poise, alike in victory and defeat. Close akin to this temperate and moderate life and this power of self-control is the spirit of fairness and generosity to foes that college athletics ought to produce. The binding of undergraduates and graduates together, as they are bound together in their enthusiasm and in their love for *Alma Mater* at the great games, is a distinct gain to college life, and the opportunity for the expression of loyalty and love to the old college by both graduates and undergraduates is not the least of the benefits of

intercollegiate sports. The devotion to athletics furnishes the readiest expression for this spirit of patriotism and loyalty which college life breeds. As men become more and more intellectual they become more thoroughly individualized and individualistic, and in corresponding degree they lose the community feeling. Thought tends to separate men, to center each in himself, and to set him over against every other individual. It is the kinship of feeling that brings men together in that communal spirit that makes sympathetic association and coöperation. One of the dangers of the higher education is just this tendency to individualism, this tendency toward the spirit that makes of students captious critics and fault-finders rather than sympathetic, enthusiastic workers for the common good of the college and afterwards of the community and the nation. Anything that brings large bodies of men together in loyalty to, and enthusiasm for, a common cause is good, and nowhere else is it needed so much as in college; for education is of its very essence self-centered and in a sense selfish. Whatever helps to keep young men unselfish and devoted to the good of a common cause is of inestimable worth.

All these are among the assets of intercollegiate athletics. I only name them and pass on to a fuller recognition of what I conceive to be two of the more valuable, but less often noted, uses of intercollegiate athletics. The more intellectual side of education has always tended and tends now to intellectual monasticism. The college man, as such, has always been inclined to overvalue book learning, to emphasize idealistic values, to become impractical. Until a generation ago this was a marked trait of colleges in America, just as it has been a marked trait of colleges in Europe from the Middle Ages down. We hear more of ecclesiastical monasticism than of intellectual monasticism. The commonly accepted views of religion for centuries segregated men in monasteries, and fostered in them the belief that the highest kind of life could be attained only through separation from their fellows, through debasement of the body, through sorrow and suffering and isolation. This was the view of religion held by the finest spirits of the Middle Ages and by many of the devouter souls

of all times. But this view of religion is no longer the commonly accepted one. Religion is, as we now know, service; it is action, not contemplation. Corresponding to this religious ideal there was an intellectual ideal. This ideal is responsible for the fact that fifty or a hundred years ago colleges were placed in the country, apart from the great centers of life. Studies that had no practical bearing were given the controlling place in the curriculum. Study for its own sake was valued. This ideal of education, like the mediæval ideal of religion, has about passed away. Education, like religion, is for service. We do not educate men for the pleasure they are to get out of it, to make a sort of educated cult, but to fit men for the nation's service. We have not lost sight of the value of ideals. Colleges are set to maintain the highest ideals, but one of these ideals is just this ideal of service. Perhaps no part of a boy's education has a more decided influence than have athletics in making him practical, in giving him experience, in bringing him into contact with humanity, in developing in him that wisdom without which all education is vain, and in leading to increase of power, one of the chief aims of training. As Emerson wrote long before the day of elaborate organization of sports, they furnish to the student "lessons in the art of power, which it is his main business to learn;" and only through them, as Emerson has also said, "can that amount of vital force accumulate which can make the step from knowing to doing." Therefore it is not surprising to hear one of the most experienced college officers in the country say, as he recently did say, that business men, in seeking young graduates for responsible business positions, prefer athletes to first-honor men. The athlete is more apt to be trained in the art of power and to possess the qualities that make possible large success in business.

There is a certain unmistakable tendency in American education that is making for effeminacy. It has come to pass that women have practical control of the secondary schools, and their influence there is dominant. The softer and more effeminate ideals of life have got strong hold upon all stages of education, as they have got almost complete control of modern English literature. As civilization advances, the more rugged,

manly virtues are apt to be superseded by the gentler and softer virtues that are traditionally associated with women. To be perfect one must, like Bob, Son of Battle, have the ways of a woman and the strength of a man; but to lose the manly virtues in pursuit of the softer and more beautiful ideals of life would be a great loss. Intercollegiate athletics, like hunting and war, help to develop the manly side of men, to make them rugged and strong. However good and fine a man may be, to succeed in a world like this he needs power, bravery, and force of character. Athletics serve a useful end in counteracting the softening and effeminating tendencies that show themselves in education, literature, and the prevalent ideals of highly civilized society, and in promoting those qualities—masculine, elemental, savage, if you will—that belong to uncivilized men, but that should not be entirely lost in the most advanced state of civilization.

These are great contributions that athletics may make to American college life if they are properly controlled and are carried on in the proper spirit. But only through right control may they be saved from the perils that threaten them and the evils that now actually beset them.

The two chief dangers of intercollegiate athletics, against which colleges must guard themselves, are excess and the spirit that would win by unfair means. It may almost be fairly said that these are the two prominent dangers in American life. The excess that manifests itself in college sports is only a reflection of the same spirit abroad in our country. The intensity in college sports is one manifestation of the spirit which American people now put into everything, and the craze for winning games embodies the spirit and methods of trade. The impulses and habits acquired at home are carried into the schools and colleges. These faults which everybody recognizes as belonging to intercollegiate games are therefore not to be charged to any inherent weakness in the system, but are to be taken as manifestations of American life. While, then, these faults must not be regarded as inherent weaknesses inevitably attaching themselves to intercollegiate sports, yet these faults must be overcome, else they will make college sports more hurt-

ful than useful, and will in the end destroy them altogether. Excess in everything, like vaulting ambition, overleaps itself and falls on the other side; and it is to the credit of the American people that they will in the long run discountenance unfairness of every kind. The excess to which athletics are carried, particularly in the larger American colleges, has caused athletics to overshadow the serious work of students. It not only interferes with the work of the students who are engaged in athletics, but it is a distraction to large bodies of students from their proper work. The stress grows more intense year by year, and continually the athletic ideal is being substituted for the intellectual ideal. Students are honored more for success in athletics than for success in their studies. It may be that this is only a temporary phase of college life, but it behooves college officers to do what can be done now to counteract the overweighing importance given by students and the general public to athletics.

Athletics hold such a prominent place in the thought of students and the general public that students are too often willing to adopt questionable means of winning. They neglect their college work and devote themselves too exclusively to athletic training. They allow on their teams men who are not fit to represent them, and there comes into college athletics a spirit of professionalism, and the students are engaged in athletics not for amusement and healthy physical exercise, but they go in to win at any cost and set victory above every other consideration. Against this we must take our stand.

That this excessive importance attached to athletics is doing harm to American education cannot, I believe, be questioned. There is confessedly more moderation in England in this matter, and perhaps in all things; yet the London *Spectator* has declared that the army is going to ruin because its officers are at school spoiled by the prevalence of what may be called the playing-fields fallacy, and that nothing can be improved so long as the English parent places skill in games far above general intelligence and culture as a qualification for a commission. Kipling has put the same idea into verse in the "Islanders," a poem set in imagery grotesque and unrefined,

but shrewdly just and impressive in its very crudeness and brutal force:

Then ye returned to your trinkets; then ye contented your souls  
With the flanneled fools at the wickets or the muddled oafs at the goals.

If excessive devotion to playing-fields is doing harm in staid and conservative England, it is more dangerous in America. It is attracting too much attention in the college itself and on the outside. Intercollegiate debates, the one form of intellectual effort which may be compared with intercollegiate athletics, do not attract anything like the public attention attracted by games. This, true of public debates, is far more true of every other form of college life. What is now needed is such a regulation of athletics in college as shall secure from them the largest amount of these benefits and reduce to the minimum these grave dangers and positive evils.

The rise and development of organized sports in American colleges has taken place within the last thirty years. For many years they were left in the hands of the students, without faculty interference or control, as is still practically the case in a few colleges in the Southern States. Naturally abuses arose. The pursuit of sport for sport's sake gradually degenerated into sport for the sake of beating somebody, by fair means or foul. The inevitable result was that college faculties, whether against or with their wills, were forced to interpose their authority and to maintain strict supervision over student athletics; and it has finally come to pass that in all well-regulated colleges everywhere intercollegiate athletics have passed under faculty control, and rules have been formulated for the government of all organized college sports. These rules have been the outcome of intelligent observation of the workings of college athletics, and are therefore the records of experience, created to check abuses as from time to time they have arisen. The rules in force in all well-regulated colleges are practically the same. It must be admitted that rules of themselves will not be effectual; the letter killeth, but the spirit giveth life. Laws, however good, must be backed by enlightened public sentiment. Rules are necessary, however, because public opinion can act



only through laws, customs, traditions; and in the matter of intercollegiate athletics the laws must be definitely formulated and precedents must be widely known if we are to have uniformity of practice, without which misunderstandings and endless squabbling are unavoidable. All first-class American colleges now have thoroughly formulated rules for their guidance in intercollegiate athletics. These rules are the results of accumulated experiences, and they represent the best thought of the best institutions of learning in the country. It is foolish to imitate others unless one is convinced that what another has is better than what oneself has. It is also foolish to fly in the face of the established practices of the most intelligent people. The fact that the best colleges in America have substantially the same rules for the control of intercollegiate athletics is in itself strong presumption that the rules are useful and necessary. It is sometimes said that while the big colleges maintain rules, yet it is permissible for the small colleges to be lax in their rules in order to place them more nearly on an equality with the large colleges. The answer to this argument is not far to seek. Rules are made to purify athletics and keep them on a healthy basis, and they are not formulated to give one college an advantage over another. A college that cannot put out legitimate teams ought to withdraw from intercollegiate athletics. What it cannot do in a thoroughly creditable way it should not attempt to do. Why seek success at all if it must be won on a plane that makes it not worth the winning?

There are three main rules that practically cover the whole field and embody the eligibility requirements in the best American colleges. The first is the rule aimed at professionalism, the second embodies the scholarship test, and the third requires that a man who has taken part in athletics in one college and enters another shall reside at least one year at the latter college before he is eligible to take part in intercollegiate sports there.

A professional athlete is a man who has received money for taking part in athletics, whether before entering college or while in college, whether he plays on a summer team or whether he is paid by a college athletic organization, by stu-

dents, by graduates, or by some indirect method. I am not going to maintain that the allowing of professionals or semi-professionals to take part in college athletics is an immoral practice, provided there is no concealment about it and no evasion. But it is against the spirit and against the usage of the best colleges, and in the opinion of educated men no college can claim to be well-regulated if it permits professionalism in its athletics. If colleges send professionals against each other, it becomes a question of who can hire the strongest team, and the whole thing is reduced to an absurdity. If professionals or semiprofessionals are sent against amateurs at a sister institution, the contest is unequal if the facts are known; if they are concealed, it is unfair and dishonest. If professionalism exists in a college, there should be no effort to conceal the facts. Nothing can be more permanently vicious or hurtful to a college, which supposedly stands for truth, than the practice, unfortunately not unknown in some institutions, of playing men of doubtful amateur standing, and at the same time loudly proclaiming to the world that the standing of these men is unquestioned and unquestionable. This instilling into the educated youth of the country a belief that in order to win it is allowable to indulge in sharp practice will do more harm in a college in the long run than the college will be able to counteract by any other good offices it can perform. The time has come in nearly every part of the United States when any kind of shady practice in athletics is regarded as dishonorable. The time ought to be at hand when it will be a discredit for any college to send out a team composed of men who are not real students and amateur athletes; when to send out a team not composed of amateurs, but concealing the facts, will be judged like any other form of gross dishonesty; and when such a team, returning with victory perched upon its banners won by the aid of professional hirelings and paid coach, shall be met not with honor and acclaim but with silence and certain disfavor.

Schools and colleges should also exert themselves to keep their graduates out of professional athletics. It may not be a disgrace to be a professional baseball player, but that is a

business unworthy of a college man. A man who goes through college and has nothing better to do in life than become a professional baseball player is no credit to his college and is a reproach to education. In England they divide athletics into what they call gentlemen and players. A gentleman, as thus used, is an amateur sportsman who engages in sport for sport's sake and not for a living. A player is a professional. We should not be warranted in America in making just this distinction; but public sentiment ought to make it entirely honorable and praiseworthy to love sport for sport's sake and to engage in sport for the love of it, and to make it discreditable, if not disgraceful, for an educated man to engage in sport for a livelihood. It is greatly to be hoped that all educators and molders of public sentiment will set themselves toward making this distinction widely known and toward fostering amateur sports and discouraging professionalism among college men. The school or college that is a breeding place for professional baseball players is nothing short of a common nuisance.

The second rule prescribes a certain scholarship test. Men, to be eligible, must be duly admitted, and must be pursuing a regular, full course of study during the whole college year. This rule in the Southern Intercollegiate Association is embodied in a requirement that all students, to be eligible, must have matriculated within thirty days after the opening of college, and must be in continuous residence during the year, of course making reasonable allowance for men who have forced temporary absences on account of sickness or other unavoidable causes.

The third rule requires that when a student has taken part in intercollegiate athletics at one college and goes from the one college to another he must be in residence at the latter college one year before he can take part in intercollegiate athletics. This rule seems to some to be harsh and useless, but anybody who has honestly watched athletic conditions in the United States ought to be convinced that the rule is a necessary one. The rivalry among American colleges for athletic supremacy has become intense, and students and graduates, more anxious to win than to consider by what means they win, are eager to

go out and compel men to come into their college, to beg them or borrow them or hire them from preparatory schools or from other colleges. Money considerations and social considerations are both frequently called in to the aid of overzealous students and graduates in bringing men from other colleges. This tendency to influence men to come from other colleges is less excusable and more disgraceful than buying professional athletes and bringing them to college teams. If practiced to any extent, it impairs the athletic integrity of colleges and engenders between colleges the bitterest kind of feeling.

This rule would have made impossible the deplorable state of affairs set forth in a clipping which I have taken from a Southern newspaper, dated September 2, 1903: "The University of —— (one of the oldest and most prominent in the South) is found to be making efforts to secure several of the college athletes for its football team, and is making great offers to two of them. A man from the University of —— is here. The athletes say they will not leave, but that they will be loyal to the college." These two institutions have bad athletic records, the aggrieved college as well as the university complained of, and this incident was unworthy of both.

It is to be feared that there are still schools and colleges in the world that encourage athletics because they think that an easy and advantageous way of advertising themselves. Athletic teams are encouraged and intercollegiate games are deliberately promoted for advertising purposes. From any point of view this is bad policy. The day that a school or college receives a single student who has been brought there by its record in the field, it weakens its intellectual standard and perverts the end for which it exists. This sort of advertising can never attract the more desirable class of students, and as an advertising scheme it is unquestionably a failure. It must be admitted that it has often been imagined and sometimes affirmed that success or failure in athletic sports has an immediate influence on the attendance at college, but this is perhaps untrue. President Eliot, of Harvard College, in his report for 1900-01, has made an investigation of this question, and by statistics he has shown that in the larger colleges of

the country athletic victory has not increased the attendance and athletic defeat has not diminished it. He gives figures for Harvard, Yale, and Princeton. These cases are doubtless representative of the best colleges in the country. President Eliot concludes his investigation with these words: "If the American colleges and universities could satisfy themselves that success in athletics is not indispensable to college growth, or, better still, be persuaded that too much attention to athletic sports, and a bad tone in regard to them, hinders college growth, there would probably result a great improvement in the spirit in which college contests are conducted; they would come to be regarded as the byplay they really are and would be carried on in a sportsmanlike way as interesting and profitable amusements."

In the better colleges all over the country there has been marked improvement in recent years in the spirit in which intercollegiate athletics have been carried on; but even in the best of them there is still room for improvement, and in many of our Southern schools and colleges there is great room for improvement. We ought to urge that our colleges adopt practically the rules that have been adopted by the well-organized American colleges, that college officers see that these rules are maintained, and that they do what they can to build up a spirit of fairness and moderation that will make the rules effective. It is to be desired that the best colleges meet together in conferences and associations, such as the Southern Intercollegiate Athletic Association and the conferences of the six large Eastern colleges. The bringing together of representatives of different colleges in conferences, and the agitation attendant upon these, can only do good. Such conferences and associations also exist in the West. The reputable colleges of the North and West have fundamentally the same regulations, and they are doing much to put and keep athletics on a right basis. The Southern Intercollegiate Athletic Association was organized ten years ago, and is now composed of some twenty colleges. It has been useful in promoting the ethics of amateur sport and in putting the South in this matter in line with the best colleges in the country. There has been in some quarters

strong objection to this association. It may be admitted that in some particulars the rules have been lax, but the association is making an honest and praiseworthy effort to better athletic conditions in the South. Unless a college belongs to some stronger organization, I can see no sincere objection it could make to joining this association. It is better to join it and try to strengthen it than to remain on the outside and cavil at it. I am sorry to say my observation has taught me to believe that objections to joining such organizations are nearly always disingenuous. Last year the faculty athletic committee at Trinity College had some correspondence with a representative of a well-known Southern university in reference to a game of baseball. He refused to give any statement at all about his team, and seemed especially vicious toward the Southern Intercollegiate Athletic Association. He maintained, however, that his college was doing its best to regulate athletics, and to prove this he inclosed a copy of the by-laws of a State athletic association to which his institution belonged. But at the very outset of this document it was stated that the rules were binding only in games between members of the association. When asked if the team to be sent against ours would conform to these rules, no reply could be secured, and the game, of course, had to be canceled. Such practice as this would be discreditable on the low plane of common business; to find it resorted to by a leading institution of learning is enough to fill one with despair. We in the South are justly proud of the sense of honor and spirit of chivalry that manifest themselves in so many phases of the life of this gentle and generous people. By some strange perversity men honorable to the minutest detail of conduct in all other matters, in this one thing become sophisticated and unwilling to meet issues squarely. Some mistakes will inevitably be made, and there will always be some dissatisfaction, as there will be in every government, institution, or enterprise among men; but because an undertaking cannot be made perfect, because one cannot do everything, is no reason why one should do nothing.

But if there are colleges that have good reasons for remaining outside the Southern Intercollegiate Athletic Association,

they ought to publish to the world their attitude on the subject of intercollegiate athletics. They should either give satisfactory assurances that all their teams conform to the requirements now in force at all well-regulated American colleges, or else they should not claim to stand on the same footing with amateur college teams. Two universities play football each year "for the championship of the South," while neither of them claims to uphold the same athletic standard that is enforced in most of the better colleges South and North. This claim is not taken seriously by well-informed people, unless they be among the partisans of the two universities. There can be no just comparison when the competitors do not meet on an even footing.

In fairness I ought to add that I do not believe this unfortunate condition of athletics in some parts of our country is to be attributed to the prevalence here more than elsewhere of moral bluntness and a desire to win by fair means or foul; but it is rather due to the disorganized state of education, and as a symptom of this disorganization it is most discouraging. For a college cannot permanently maintain high and national standards of excellence in one department of its life while in another it is low and disingenuous, just as Lincoln said, "This country cannot endure half free and half slave."

The schools and colleges of the South, particularly those that rest upon broad and firm foundations, have an opportunity rare among men to do a formative and lasting work for this generation. But to do this service they must set before themselves the same tasks, the same aims, the same ideals that are cherished by great schools and colleges everywhere else. A public sentiment should go out through this entire section that will force all our institutions, high and low, to put themselves in this matter in line with the best thought and practice of the educated world.

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